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**DO YOU KNOW
THE GERMAN
DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC?**



Never in the history of Germany has any government so consistently subordinated its entire policy and work to the pursuit of peace, construction and the well-being of the people as does the Government of the German Democratic Republic.

WILHELM PIECK,
President of the German Democratic Republic

O S T S E E

HAMBURG



The German Democratic Republic

Where is its territory?
What kind of a country is it?
How did it originate?

The German Democratic Republic (referred to throughout as the "GDR") is part of the former German Reich, bounded in the North by the Baltic Sea, and in the East and South-East by the People's Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic. In the West, stretching down from the Baltic to the Czechoslovak Republic, it has a common frontier with the other German State, the Federal Republic of Germany.

The territory of the GDR covers an area of 107,670 square kilometres, i.e. roughly one-third of the whole of Germany. In size it is comparable to Belgium, Holland and Denmark.

The population of the GDR numbers 18.4 million (1950), which is as many as the combined populations of Belgium, Holland and Finland.

The GDR was proclaimed on 7th October 1949. It came into existence as the result of the separate currency reform carried out in the western part of Germany, the setting up of the "Federal Republic" and thus the temporary partitioning of Germany.

The GDR is an independent, sovereign State where the power rests in the hands of the workers and peasants. Its President is Wilhelm Pieck.

New Life from Ashes and Ruins

When the GDR was founded in autumn 1949 the people were confronted with a difficult task. The decisions of the victorious powers, the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, had only partially been realised. Thus, contrary to those decisions, Germany lost its character as an economic and political entity. In the western part, on two thirds of the territory of Germany, which after 1945 were occupied by American, British and French troops, a separate currency reform brought about the economic disruption of the country, while the subsequent proclamation of the "Federal Republic" led to its political division.

In view of these anomalous conditions, with the emergence of two German States, the GDR was compelled to adopt a series of measures which could have been dispensed with had Germany remained a united country. One of the difficulties the GDR had to contend with was the fact that by far the major part of the basic

and heavy industries were located in West Germany. But in order to be able to rebuild the country without, at the same time, running the risk of crippling indebtedness to foreign financial interests and so jeopardizing its national independence the GDR needed its own resources of ores and coal, steel works and rolling mills and large engineering factories.

In spite of the unequal distribution of Germany's mineral deposits and heavy industries, in spite of the terrible legacy of fascism, in spite of large-scale war damage, and the poor state of industry and agriculture caused by years of neglect, the people in the GDR did not despair. They performed heroic deeds of labour and created the foundations of socialism in their country. Meagre were the food rations allocated to the citizens in those days, yet they achieved great victories. Mountains of débris were cleared away, and from the rubble of bombed factories rose new modern enterprises and machines.

The basis for the construction of the GDR was the various democratic reforms introduced during the early postwar period, such as the

break-up of big landed estates and their distribution to farm labourers and small-holders and the holding of a plebiscite which resulted in the transfer of factories and industrial establishments belonging to former war and nazi criminals into the hands of the people.

Step by step the advance continued. In 1948 the first short-term economic plan for the territory of the GDR was adopted, to be followed by a Two-Year Plan covering the period from 1949 to 1950. Then, from 1951 to 1955, came the first great Five-Year Plan which was no longer limited to the erection of individual factories but which aimed at the creation of entire new industries. To ease the lot of the farming population machine and tractor stations were set up in agricultural areas. Complete new town districts and whole villages sprang up and many schools, hospitals, theatres, sports centres, holiday homes and churches were built. Numerous price cuts were decreed and wages repeatedly raised.

On this difficult but successful road the people of the GDR followed the lead given by the anti-

fascist democratic parties, at their head the party of the working class, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Since the founding of the GDR affairs of state have been conducted by a Government of workers and peasants with Otto Grotewohl as Prime Minister.

Never will the German people forget the selfless fraternal aid rendered them at all times by the peoples of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Democracies.



For rebuilding its economy the country lacked the necessary supplies of coal, ores and metals. The Martin Hoop coal mine in Zwickau was opened up as part of the new basic industries development programme.



The "West" Iron Works at Calbe is one of the series of new iron and steel plants erected in the GDR. It is operating on the low-shaft coke-from-lignite principle.



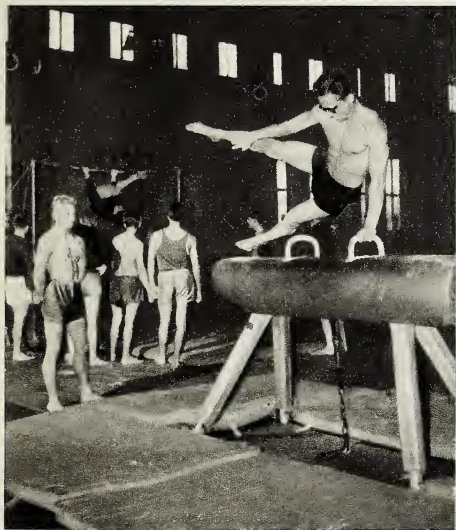
New villages have been founded where one-time agricultural labourers now till their own land as independent farmers. To help them overcome initial difficulties the Government granted long-term credits totalling 500 million marks.



Like these in Leipzig new beautiful dwellings for the workers to live in are going up all over the country. Not all are huge blocks of flats. People who prefer a small house or bungalow may join one of the building co-operatives and choose their own design.



All over the country new theatres, cinemas and cultural establishments are being opened up to the public. A splendid example is the restoration of the Berlin State Opera. In the smaller towns where they have no theatre guest artists perform in suitable halls.



In towns and villages numerous athletic grounds are being constructed. The largest establishment of its kind is the German Academy of Physical Culture and Sport in Leipzig. All the larger factories have their own sports grounds attached to them

Threshold of a New Industrial Revolution

At the end of the first and the beginning of the second Five-Year Plans the people of the GDR can point to a number of outstanding achievements. During this period the GDR has emerged a fully sovereign State. Its working class proved that it had learned to direct the political and economic affairs of the country, and it is due to their great successes in the field of socialist construction that the GDR has become a strong and equal partner in the comity of peace-loving nations.

Economic development proceeded in a mighty sweep forward. Today the GDR is an important economic factor on the world market as witness the trade fairs at Leipzig, undisputed centre of West-East commercial transactions. In this respect the 1956 Leipzig Spring Fair, with its record number of participants hailing from forty different countries, furnished convincing proof of the growing economic strength of the Republic.

Politically the international reputation of the GDR is steadily increasing because it pursues a policy of peace and respects the national rights of all peoples.

The inherent strength of the GDR derives from the active participation of the entire population in the realisation of the economic plans.

On this basis it was possible, for example, to raise the output of pig iron to 450 per cent, expand production in the field of heavy industries to 177.1 per cent, in the metallurgical industry to 216 and in the foodstuffs industry to 216.5 per cent. The GDR has overtaken all capitalist countries in rate of development, becoming an industrial power occupying fifth place among European states.

Thus, with the successful completion of the first Five-Year Plan, the people of the GDR have laid the foundation for a happy and prosperous future of the German people as a whole.

The magnitude of the tasks set by the second Five-Year Plan may be gauged from the fact that capital investments amount to 47,600 million marks, which is twice the amount spent during the first Five-Year Plan.

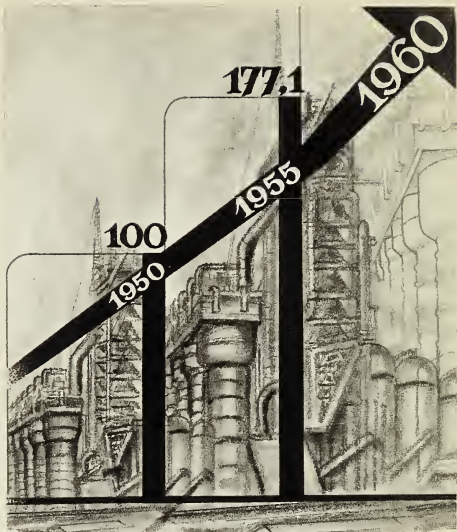
The second Five-Year Plan will change completely the face of industry in this country. Its chief targets are large-scale mechanisation and automation and the application of the most recent techniques in farming. Considerable sums of money are set aside for nuclear research to enable GDR scientists to reach their goal, the maximum exploitation of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Ocean-going ships, aeroplanes, modern rail and road transport vehicles, machine tools of latest design, these are some of the high-lights of this great plan.



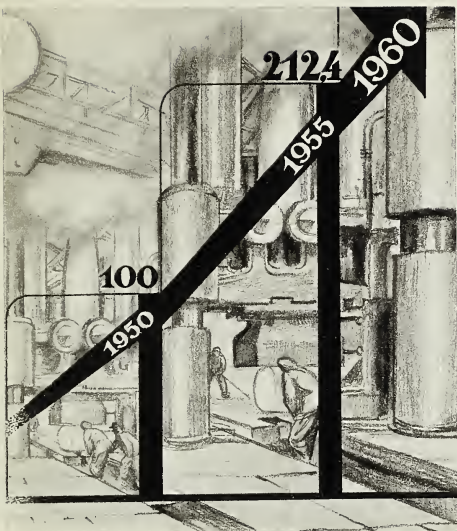
As is shown by the development of its industrial gross output the GDR reached the target set by the first Five-Year Plan and now produces twice as much as in 1936. This has been accomplished within the relatively short time of ten years.



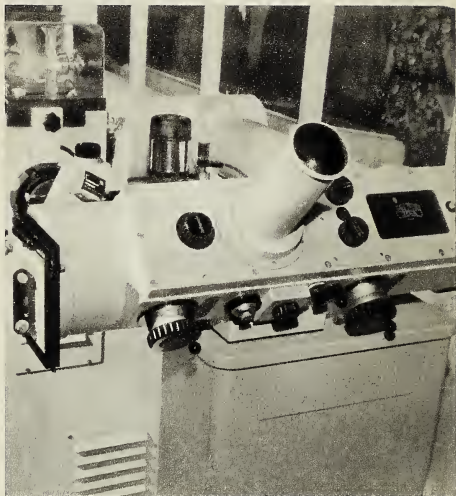
In consequence the GDR has been able to exceed the rate of development of the capitalist countries. As an industrial power the GDR now occupies fifth place in Europe.



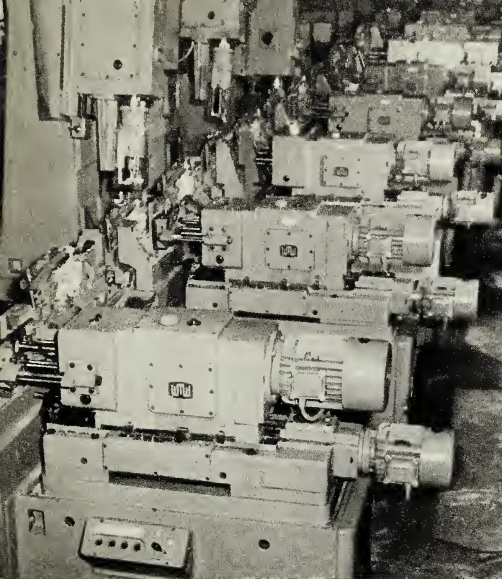
In the field of heavy industries output rose to 177.1 per cent between 1950 and 1955. The second Five-Year Plan envisages the investment of 23,000 million marks in machines and equipment.



Production in the engineering industry climbed to 212.4 per cent during the past years, thus more than doubling output. By 1960 construction of machine tools will be 124.6 per cent higher than at the present time.



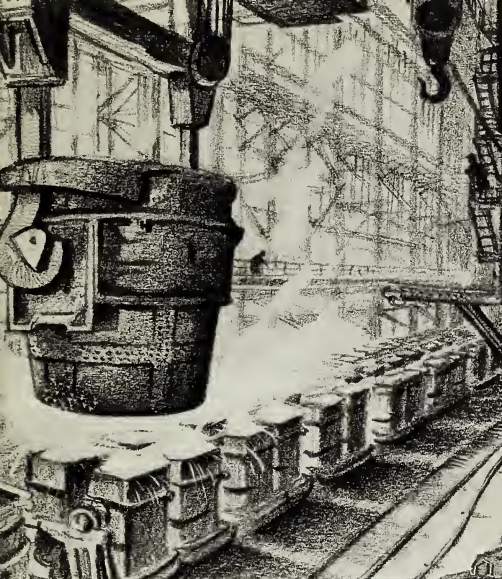
By 1955 the technical standard of industrial products had reached a high level. Machines and plant are the biggest export items, thanks to their excellent performance and precision.



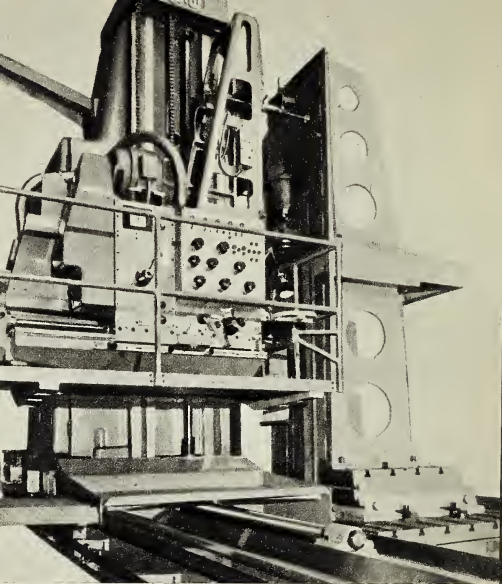
Mechanisation and automation in industry are among the aims of the second Five-Year Plan. They will do away with much heavy physical labour and save many hands. This production line is the forerunner of many more.



Pig iron production rose by 450 per cent during the first Five-Year Plan. The second Five-Year Plan provides for a further increase to 148.4 per cent taking 1955 as 100. At the same time the proportion of indigenous raw materials is to be increased.



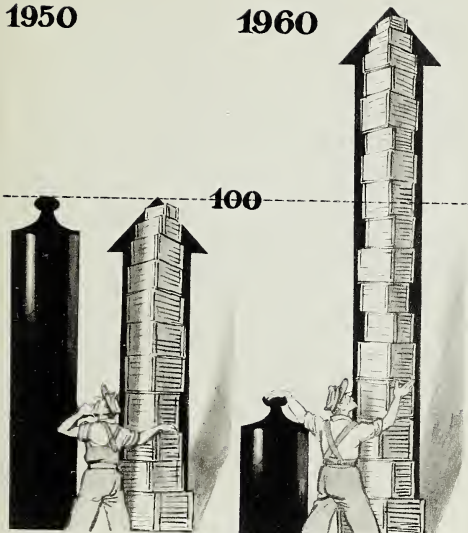
To reach this target foundries are to be mechanised thereby eliminating many working processes involving heavy physical exertion.



Many excellent machines distinguished for their high performance are built in the GDR. The best designers, engineers and technicians are awarded State prizes.

1950

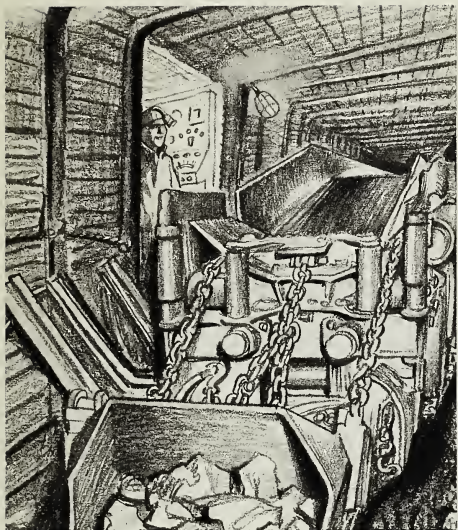
1960



The second Five-Year Plan demands from the team of technical scientists the solution of a great new problem, namely to reduce the overall weight of machines while at the same time improving their efficiency.



New shafts have been sunk during the past few years to put the GDR in a position to tap fresh sources of mineral wealth. Hard-coal mining is of particular importance.



The output of hard coal during the second Five-Year Plan is to be pushed up to 2.9 million tons annually. One of the first steps in this direction is the introduction of automatic processes in the "Martin Hoop IV" and "Karl Marx I" pits.



There is no country in the world which produces so much brown coal as the GDR. In 1950 output amounted to 137.2 million tons, in 1955 it was 200 million tons and the plan target for 1960 is 260 million tons.



A new brown-coal combine is under construction, the biggest of its kind in Europe, and is scheduled to start production in 1963 with a capacity of 32.8 million tons per year. In the vicinity a complete new town for the miners is to be built.



Brown coal is one of the GDR's most precious raw materials. Its utilisation and conversion is a scientific task of the first order and millions of marks are spent by the State every year on research work.



Brown coal is today the basic material for an amazing variety of products such as coke, tar, oils, fats, gas, energy, perlon and related fabrics, medicinal drugs, plastics and various other items.



Employing almost 30,000 people the "Walter Ulbricht" Leuna Works is the biggest chemical factory in the GDR. By 1960 additional personnel, 2,000 university-trained and 2,500 from technical schools, will have gone into the chemical industry.



Up to 1945 Leuna produced weapons of mass murder. Today it is working for peace turning out potash, among other things, a fertilizer much in demand everywhere which helps to increase agricultural yields.



Before 1945 there were no shipyards on the Baltic coast capable of building ocean-going vessels. Since then the GDR has constructed four such yards, at Rostock, Warnemünde, Wismar and Stralsund.



The first 10,000-ton vessels have already been launched. During the second Five-Year Plan twelve such freighters will be built for service in the Asian and African trade



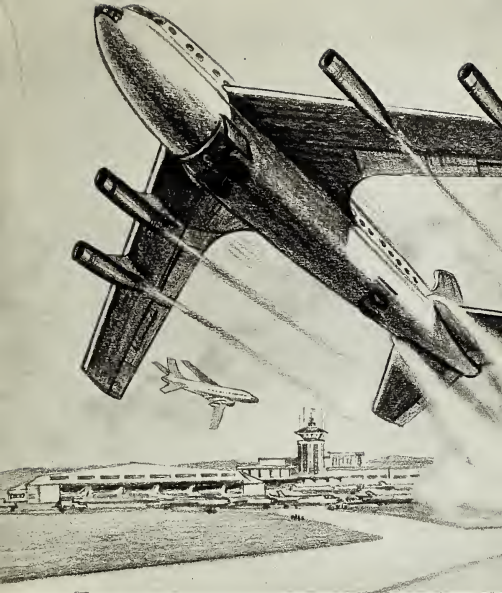
There will also be changes in railway locomotion. At present large heavy steam engines predominate in the GDR, but many of them will be replaced by electric and Diesel engines in the course of the second Five-Year Plan.



The main lines will be largely electrified. New modern coaches and railway wagons are being designed, among them electric double-decker coach trains for passenger service.



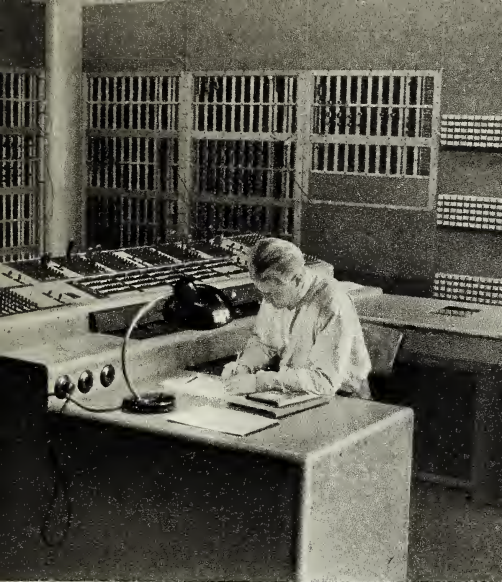
The aircraft industry is new to the GDR. During 1955 the first Lufthansa plane was put into service on the Berlin-Prague route.



Preliminary work has now reached a stage where production of modern transport and passenger planes with propeller, turbine and jet propulsion can be started.



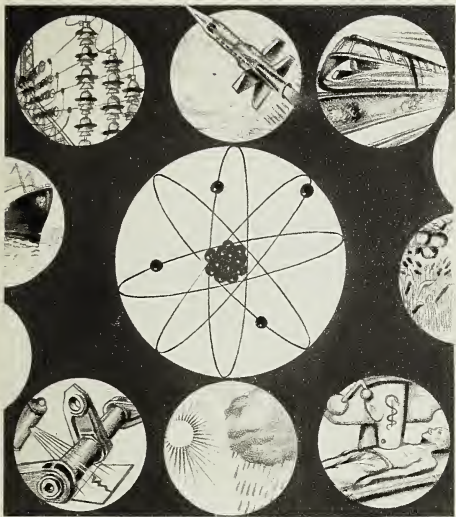
The eminence of the optical industry of the GDR is acknowledged the world over and the name of "Zeiss" Jena has become an international household word. Planetaria like the one illustrated are built only in Jena.



There they have also developed a relay-controlled computer which does the work of fifty highly trained optical calculators. Many more important problems are set GDR scientists by the second Five-Year Plan.



Atomic energy, the new unlimited source of power, serves the cause of peace in the GDR and will become the servant of man. A large atomic research centre is at present being constructed.



There are many possibilities for the peaceful application of the powerful forces imprisoned in the atom, chief among them being the generation of electric power.



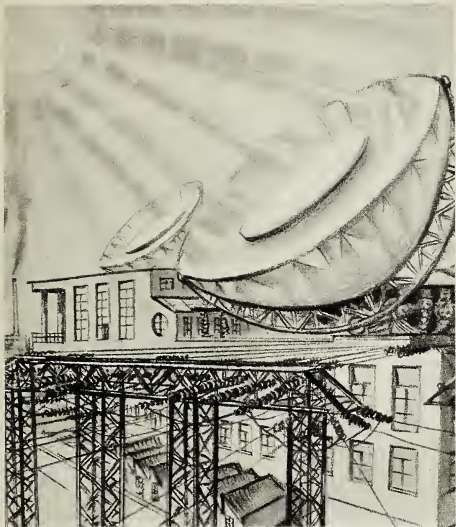
For several years now revolutionary changes have been transforming the methods of farming in the GDR. The horse is gradually being replaced by the machine. The second Five-Year Plan, too, provides for tens of thousands of tractors.



New technical methods and machine power are taking the place of physical labour, both in soil cultivation and in stockbreeding. Implicit in this progress is the manufacture of potato and beet harvesting machines.



Physical research is to be put on a much broader basis. In the field of electrical engineering emphasis is laid on the development of semi-conductors and the conductivity of certain metals.



One of the problems scientists are trying to solve is the possibility of converting the sun's heat into electrical energy. Results obtained so far concerning the properties of semi-conductors are encouraging.

GDR Foreign Trade has Trebled

The economy of the GDR depends to a great extent on the country's foreign trade which is why particular emphasis is placed on its expansion. During the period of the first Five-Year Plan, from 1951 to 1955, the foreign trade of the GDR trebled, and it is to be raised by a further 70 per cent during the second Five-Year Plan now begun.

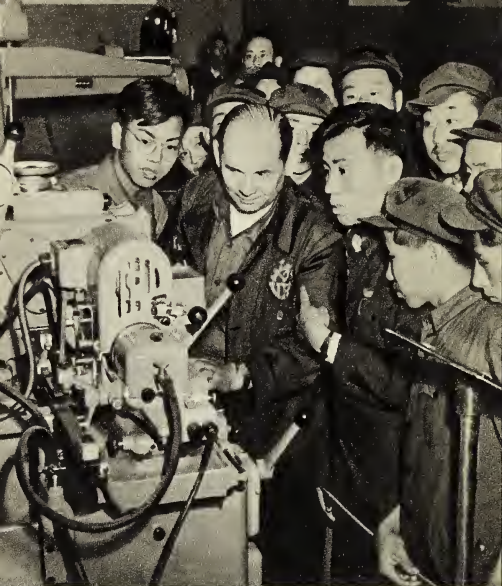
The bulk of the GDR's foreign trade is transacted with states maintaining friendly relations with the German Democratic Republic, and 75 per cent of all exports are taken up by the Soviet Union, China and the other Peoples' Democracies. But the turnover with all other countries is also being continually extended. In its dealings the GDR is guided by the idea that trade and economic co-operation can play an important role in securing peaceful development and co-existence among states with different social systems.

A notable feature giving cause for satisfaction is the steady growth of commercial transactions

with such countries as India, Egypt, Burma, Syria, Lebanon and Sudan, whose peoples within the past few years have managed to throw off the colonial yoke and gain their national independence. Highly developed commercial and economic relations with these countries, based on the strict observance of the principle of equality and mutual benefit, are the reasons for this.

The mainstay of the GDR's foreign trade is the supply of machines and industrial plant, and almost two thirds of all exports are made up of such products. It is precisely in this field where great progress has been made in the GDR during the first Five-Year Plan, and it is an established fact that GDR-made machines and equipment rank today with the finest in the world.

This is an excellent starting point for developing ever closer commercial relations especially with the countries in Asia and Africa. What makes it an even more attractive proposition is the fact that the GDR with its great reservoir of highly skilled workers and scientists is in a position to promise and actually render effective aid to other countries engaged in the building up of their own national economies.



In 1954 the GDR organised large exhibitions in Peking and Shanghai. Mao Tse-tung praised the high degree of technical perfection of the exhibits. People's China is a large importer of GDR-made machines.



Several hundred thousand people from all over India who went to the New Delhi Industries Fair in 1955 paid a visit to the GDR section. Among the visitors were Prime Minister Nehru seen here with Mr. Heinrich Rau, Minister for Foreign Trade of the GDR.



In 1954 the GDR organised an exhibition in Cairo. In 1955 Mr. Heinrich Rau, Minister for Foreign Trade of the GDR, visited Egypt and was received by State President Nasser. Mutual trade benefits both countries.



The GDR also attended the 2nd International Damascus Fair held in the Syrian capital. President of State, Shukri el Kuvatly, in conversation with the head of the GDR delegation.



At the state-owned "Modul" works in Karl-Marx-Stadt (formerly Chemnitz) highly efficient machine tools are built. "Modul" specialises in gear drives.



Under the terms of existing commercial agreements the Republic of Egypt buys machines and industrial equipment of every type from the GDR.



The design and construction of sugar mills is a specialised branch of industry in the GDR. On the suggestions submitted by engineers and highly skilled workers the installations are continuously being improved with a view to raising output of sugar.



Such sugar mills, including all auxiliary plant, figure on the export list of the GDR. In accordance with the trade agreement concluded with Indonesia the GDR is now supplying sugar mills to Djakarta.



Magdeburg, Erfurt, Leipzig, Wildau, Berlin and Karl-Marx-Stadt are important engineering centres in the GDR. Many machines and complete factory plants are made there and shipped to all parts of the world.



Complicated machines and installations en route to their destination in some far-away country are frequently accompanied by specialists who help with the erection, as in the case of this cement mill in India.

Learning with a capital "L"

Nothing illustrates better the attitude of the German ruling class before 1945 than the phrase uttered in parliament by a former junker, owner of a thousand hectares of land, who said:

"Why talk about higher education for agricultural workers? As far as I am concerned I am quite satisfied with a couple of oxen to pull the plough and a third behind it."

The children were taught just enough to be able to carry out the duties assigned to them in the factories and on the big farms, while the right to better education or the possibility of entering one of the famous German universities were reserved for the children of the well-to-do.

After 1945 the entire educational system in the GDR was overhauled. Tens of thousands of new teachers were engaged, new curricula worked out and hundreds of new elementary and higher-grade schools built. Besides the eight-form elementary schools and the high schools, new ten-form schools were created. Every year several hundred million marks of Government money go into education to provide for new buildings, teachers' salaries and instruction aids. Numerous academies, institutes, colleges and universities were enlarged or newly built. During the 1954-55 academic year 83,500 male and female students took courses at universities in the GDR. They have a choice of forty-six universities and col-

leges of which fourteen were newly opened during the two years between 1953 and 1955.

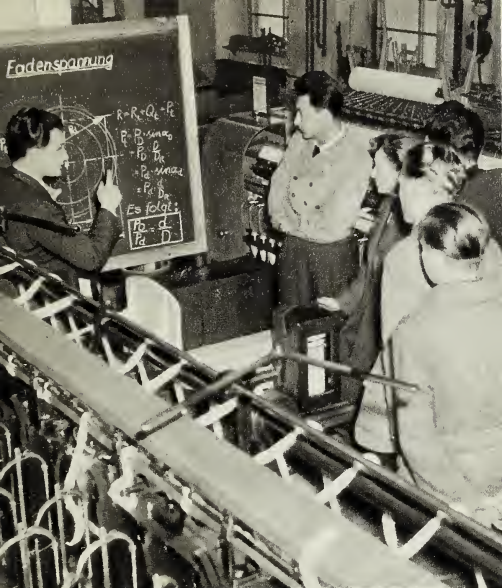
Every science is taught in the GDR and every subject may be studied. Apart from the fact that ninety-six per cent of all university students pay no fees, they receive, in addition, an ample scholarship for themselves and, if married, an extra allowance to support their families. Quite a number of the students come from other countries including Africa and Asia.

Students from the GDR may also take up studies at foreign universities on the basis of an exchange scheme embracing this country, the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Democracies.

In conclusion a few words about the young boys and girls between the ages of six and fourteen years. Large sums of money have already been spent on the creation of facilities designed to further their interests. This includes the provision of what is known here as "Pioneer Palaces" and "Pioneer Houses", well-equipped stations for "Young Technicians", "Young Scientists" and "Young Tourists". They are open to children during after-school hours and give them the opportunity to occupy themselves by following their natural inclinations. The second Five-Year Plan envisages polytechnical education in all general schools as a means of facilitating the choice of profession and the corresponding training while still young.



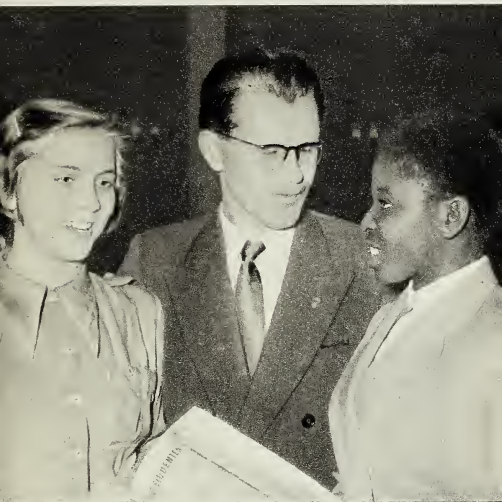
Dresden Technical College is the largest of its kind in the whole of Germany. In 1945 85 per cent had been destroyed by bombs, but the Government had it rebuilt and today almost 18,000 people are teaching and studying there.



The first faculty of nuclear physics in the whole of Germany was opened there. Dresden Technical College has now ten science faculties and 120 institutes.



To keep pace with rapid advances in the field of technical science the educational system must be adapted accordingly. Thus the coming years will see the extension in the curriculum of craft subjects and practical polytechnical training.



Young people of many different nationalities, especially from Asian and African countries, are studying in the GDR. One of them is Tunde Idowu from Nigeria who is taking a medical course at Leipzig University.

Foundations of a Happy Future

In the GDR life is conditioned by the fact that there is nobody in this country who profits from war or who could possibly gain by it. That is why the longing for a durable peace is no temporary attachment but deeply rooted and a permanently effective and powerful factor typical of the workers' and peasants' State.

It is this desire to maintain peace in the world and the knowledge that it can be translated into reality, because the people of every country raise their voices ever louder in support of it, which gave the men and women in the GDR the strength to accomplish such magnificent tasks in building the country's economy. Each year their efforts are rewarded by ever greater successes.

The principle of equal pay for equal work has been carried into effect and women and young workers receive the same wages as men for doing the same job. Year after year the average monthly wages of the workers rise very considerably, and during the second Five-Year Plan a further thirty per cent increase is provided for. Several far-reaching price reductions in the fields of food-stuffs, textiles and other industrial consumer goods have effectively increased purchasing power.

Important factors are the social and cultural measures taken by the State and the trade unions

in the interests of factory workers. Many thousand million marks were invested in the construction of Houses of Culture and clubs, libraries, polyclinics and factory sanatoria, shower baths and rest rooms, sports grounds and workers' holiday homes. All these facilities to be enjoyed by the working people free of charge.

The life of the rural population has improved in similar fashion. Thanks to the farsighted measures of the Government, which spent thousands of millions of marks on the mechanisation of farm work, the basis has now been created for a steadily rising agricultural yield.

More efficient tilling of the soil with the aid of modern technical methods will bring higher yields and thus increase the farmers' earnings! This aim did not fail to produce the expected results and during the past few years farmers trebled their incomes from the sale of agricultural produce.

One more look at the expenditure side of the State budget. Within the last five years the Government voted 12,600 million marks for the requirements of education, science and art, a sum so vast that no state in the long history of Germany has ever come anywhere near it. Such truly astronomical figures could probably have been found on the expenditure side connected with armaments and war, but never with peace and progress.



Coal miner Adolf Hennecke showed workers of the GDR how the full utilisation of existing technical plant leads to higher production results.



Weaver Frida Hockauf appealed to her fellow-workers in the GDR by stating: "As we work today, so shall we live tomorrow." Millions of workers in factories and offices took up her call.



Hundreds of polyclinics have been built in the GDR. Workers are treated there free of charge and their full wage is guaranteed them even though the treatment is during working ours.



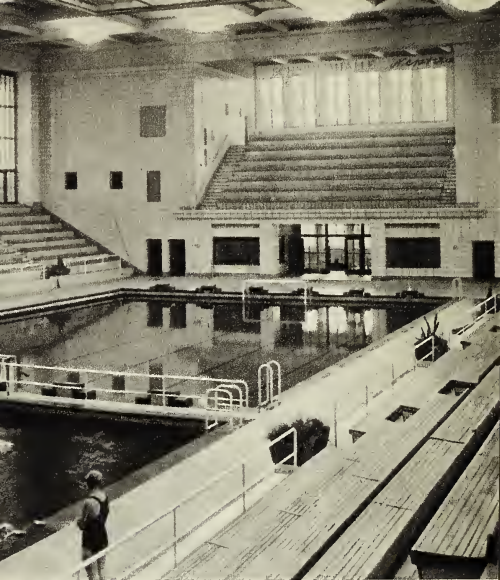
Each working day workers can obtain a midday meal cooked in the works' kitchens and served in spacious dining halls. There is always a choice of several courses. These meals are very popular and cost relatively little.



The trade unions possess large holiday homes. For a fortnight's stay, including all meals, a worker pays not more than roughly ten per cent of his monthly wages.



The "Volksbühne" in Berlin is one of the many new theatres opened in recent years. Talented young artists, chosen from among the gifted of ordinary people, are given a thorough education at the expense of the Government.



This indoor swimming pool was built in Rostock in 1955 and is among the most up-to-date of its kind. Rostock, which formerly had no modern sports facilities worth the name, also now has a large sports stadium.



One of the new large sports halls in Berlin. Like all others this hall was built with the aid of Government funds. During the winter a cycling track is erected for a season of indoor racing. It is also Berlin's principal rink for ice hockey and figure skating.



"Houses of Culture" and clubs numbering 1,100 and 17,500 rooms for cultural or club activities have been created. Almost 800,000 factory and office workers are participating in one form or other in the 25,000 song and dance ensembles formed in the GDR.

TO THE READER

This booklet is meant to familiarise you with some aspects of life in the German Democratic Republic, and we sincerely hope that you may find in it quite a few things of interest to you. Yet we are sure, after reading, there will remain other questions to which you might want an answer. So if you will write to us and tell us your opinion about the contents and what other topics you would like to have discussed, we shall be only too glad to let you have further material about the German Democratic Republic and the lives of the people here as well as news on economic, political and cultural events.

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